EDITOR
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FARNHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's Report,

1898.

The area of the Rural District Council is 28,595 acres.

The Population is reckoned at 13,950.

The Births registered in 1898 were 452, 32·4 per 1000.

The Deaths registered were 220, 15·77 per 1000.

This includes 20 deaths occurring in the Farnham Workhouse, Trimmer's Cottage Hospital, Guildford County Hospital and Brookwood Asylum, cases which were admitted into these Institutions from within the area of the Rural District Council.

Summary of Sickness and Mortality from the Eight Principal Zymotic Diseases and the action taken to prevent their spread.

Small Pox.

No cases.

Measles.

This disease has not been at all prevalent, and where cases have occurred they have been of a mild type.

Whereas 9 deaths were attributable last year to this disease with its attendant complications, only 1 death has occurred this year throughout the entire district.

Whooping Cough.

Not so prevalent as last year, only 2 deaths. Last year 6 deaths were attributable to this disease.

Membranous Croup.

One case notified. No death.

Scarlet Fever.

This disease has been much more prevalent during this year than last, chiefly in the Parishes of Farnham Rural (Hale) and Frensham, out of a total of 47 cases notified 16 occurred in Farnham Rural, 27 in Frensham, 3 in Ash and 1 in Seale.

Although the generality of these cases were of a mild character there were exceptions to this, and two deaths are registered in Farnham Rural as attributable to this disease.

The cases at Hale occurred in the months of February, March, April, May and June, and were undoubtedly connected with each other. At about the middle of May the Temporary Isolation Hospital was ready for use and cases were removed there for treatment with the result that at the end of June the epidemic ceased.

An outbreak took place at Churt in the month of February in connection with the National Schools there, the Infant School Mistress and 4 of the Master's family failing with the disease.

The School was promptly closed and only 1 other case occurred in the district.

A series of cases occurred in Frensham Parish during the months of August and September, 16 in all being notified, of these cases, three were removed to the Isolation Hospital. Six households were affected, one being quite an isolated case at Shottermill. I did not consider that in this instance it was necessary to close the Schools.

In December 3 cases in one family failed with the disease at Churt, and as one of the family on enquiry was found to have attended Churt Schools whilst desquamating, I thought it right to advise the immediate closing of the Schools until after the Xmas Holidays. The 3 cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital and no further cases occurred in the District.

Diarrhœa.

Nine fatal cases registered. Eight under 5 years of age. Five cases in Farnham Rural. Three in Ash. One in Seale.

These were no doubt in part attributable to the extreme heat of the summer and consequent scarcity of water supply, a potent factor as regards the prevalence of Infant Diarrhœa.

Diphtheria.

Notified 28 cases.

Farnham Rural	13 cases	1 death.
Frensham	12 cases	—
Dockenfield	1 case	1 death.
Ash	2 cases	1 death.

This compares very favourably with the returns for last year, when there were in all 49 cases notified and nine deaths occurred.

The cases occurring in the Farnham Rural Parish during the earlier part of the year were of an isolated character, but in the month of December a localised outbreak took place in Alma Lane and Heath End—in all 5 cases; 2 of these were removed to the Isolation Hospital, 1 died before possibility of removal and 2 were of such a slight character that the medical attendant did not recommend their removal.

Typhoid Fever.

Has not been at all prevalent, only 3 cases having been notified. Two deaths occurred, 1 being in the Workhouse after removal there. All in Farnham Rural Parish.

The total number of fatal cases from these 8 diseases has been

Farnham Rural	10
Dockenfield	1
Ash	5
Seale	2
	18

Rate per 1000 1·29.

Last year the number of deaths was 28. Rate 2·0 per 1000.

The diminished mortality this year is principally due to the few fatal cases attributable to Measles and Whooping Cough.

The low mortality from Diphtheria is very gratifying—three deaths only occurring as against 47 cases notified to the Authority.

As regards the prevalence of Scarlet Fever, it is more and more evident that prompt isolation is the most potent factor in dealing with this disease; in this we have a most marked example in the latest threatened outbreak at Churt in the month of December last.

The small number of Typhoid cases (3 as against 6 occurring last year) with such a large population is a very satisfactory feature and is undoubtedly due to the improved sanitary condition of the District.

The mortality from Bronchitis and Pneumonia is higher than last year, 47 cases as against 25.

Thirty-eight deaths occurred from Heart Disease.

Thirteen deaths are attributed to Consumption.

GENERAL PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE SANITARY ACTS.

Water Supply.

In my last year's report I laid especial stress on the great want of an efficient water supply in various parts of our District and welcomed the Wey Valley Water scheme as one that would be "an inestimable boon to the District." "A regular supply of good pure water being an inestimable boon and an immense preservative of the Public Health." Since this report was penned the Wey Valley Water Co. have succeeded in obtaining from Parliament the powers they asked for excepting the supplying of Haslemere; a result largely due to the support given to the Bill by the Farnham District Council and the County Medical Officer.

I have no hesitation in saying that had the Bill not received that support the Company would not have obtained the powers they did.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Company are losing no time in pressing forward with their work and already mains are laid to Wrecclesham, Badshot Lea, The Bourne and on towards Frensham.

It remains for the Council to assist the Company as far as it lies in its power to insist upon properties within reasonable distance of the mains and without an adequate supply being connected therewith in a reasonable time.

Scavenging.

Last year's report also urgently pointed out the immediate necessity for a scheme of Scavenging to be applied for the relief of Hale, Heath End and Badshot Lea.

It is unnecessary to repeat here the arguments used by me in that report.

The Council recognising the necessity of something being done have inaugurated a scheme of Scavenging for these Districts. This will be a great boon and a most important sanitary step in these growing neighbourhoods, neighbourhoods which are becoming in their character more Urban than Rural, and possessing in most instances quite an insufficient area of ground for the disposal of sewage, dry or otherwise.

Farnham Joint Isolation Hospital.

Early in May the temporary Isolation Hospital erected by the Isolation Hospital Committee was ready for use and up to the 1st of January when the permanent Hospital was opened, was with the exception of a week or two constantly occupied, shewing how necessary it was to provide accommodation without delay.

Up to the end of the year 28 cases were admitted from the Rural and the Urban Districts, and of these 14 were from the Rural District ; 11 cases of Scarlet Fever and 3 of Diphtheria.

I have previously referred to the absolute advantages gained by the prompt isolation of these cases in preventing the spread of disease, and it is gratifying that up to the present time although in all 34 cases have been treated in the Hospital there has been no fatal case, and that the parents of the patients and the adult patients themselves have expressed themselves as grateful for the care taken of them.

The Hospital as it now stands contains 30 Beds and 4 Cots, but supposing a severe epidemic were to arise the cubic space at our disposal would safely enable us to accommodate more without any detriment to the patients themselves, whilst the ample accommodation provided in the Administrative Block is sufficient to accommodate an ample staff of Nurses requisite for any emergency. We are also in a position to deal with three different diseases simultaneously.

As an Isolation Hospital I should consider the Farnham Hospital second to none in the County. I consider the joint Councils are heartily to be congratulated on possessing the same, and I am quite sure the joint populations will reap the most valuable advantages and protection from it in the years to come.

I venture to think that in no other Sanitary area of the County of Surrey has such progress been made as there has been in ours in the year 1898, viz., the establishment of a good water supply, the completion of the Isolation Hospital and lastly the starting of an urgently wanted scheme of Scavenging for a portion of the District.

The general Sanitary work as regards the Medical Officer of Health and the Inspectors has been carried out on the ordinary lines.

Nuisances are continually being dealt with by the Inspector and his assistant, and the appointment of an assistant has rendered it possible to render the inspections more regular and effective ; the improved Sanitary condition of the District proving this.

Churt and Ash Schools are the only Schools that have been closed during the past year.

Under the Housing of the Working Classes Acts only one notice was served during the past year.

I have no knowledge of any pollution of the Blackwater in our District. Bartram's Mills have not been the subject of any complaint during the past year.

I must in concluding this report again express my acknowledgments to Dr. Seaton, the County Medical Officer, for his assistance and advice which he is always ready and glad to give.

I have also to thank Mr. Patrick for his painstaking work and the assistance he has given me, and especially for his assistance in aiding me in the work of the Temporary Isolation Hospital, removing patients, and superintending the process of disinfection.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

JOHN A. LORIMER,

Medical Officer of Health Farnham Rural District Council.